

Agricultural Marketing Service
Deputy Administrator for Marketing Programs
Cotton Division
Classing Office
Computer Operator, GS-332-05

SJ CN33

I. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in a classing office, Cotton Division, Agricultural Marketing Service. The Offices are responsible for Cotton Division programs which include classification of cotton; collection and dissemination of market news on cotton, cottonseed, and linters; statistical procedures incidental to quality estimates of the cotton crop and the annual carryover; services to organized cotton improvement groups; and establishment and maintenance of cooperative relations with the cotton industry.

The incumbent operates the computer system and peripheral equipment in the Classing office.

II. MAJOR DUTIES

The incumbent operates a stand-alone minicomputer system which consists of a control console/terminal, central processor containing control and utility programs, a disk drive, and peripheral equipment such as key punch, high speed printer, and decollator. Also operates a microcomputer which can also be used as a terminal tied into the minicomputer.

Activates system control programs and associated input by entering prescribed commands into the console.

Enters commands for various programs to produce a variety of reports. Schedules jobs based on memory capacity. Monitors machine processing.

Takes prompt action in response to programmed instruction, error messages, machine failure, etc. Aborts and restarts lines when necessary.

Loads and unloads disks; transfers information from permanent to floppy disk; and if floppy disk is damaged, makes new floppy disk from permanent disk.

Identifies equipment problems such as hung tapes, or failure to respond to key-in commands and attempts to correct by standardized procedures.

As advised by Division Computer Specialists or computer technical representatives, enters commands, makes minor mechanical adjustments and similar actions to correct problems, and reports success or failure of actions to the technical representative.

Searches printed error messages, identifies source of errors, and enters corrections.

Operates and monitors peripheral equipment such as key punch machines, high speed printers, and decollators.

Coordinates telecommunications (on-line) access by outside users (such as gins, agents, etc.). Provides instruction on communications software. Assigns identification codes and sets up passwords. Monitors security of system.

Downloads data daily and weekly on backup tapes.

Maintains all tables in the data base associated with the classing operation by entering and deleting data when required.

Performs routine minor maintenance such as cleaning the equipment, replacing ribbons, etc.

Orders supplies for the computer room such as cards, paper, ribbons, etc.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required By the Position:

Knowledge of basic, standardized and frequently used rules and procedures used to start the computer system, monitor the operations in progress and resolve commonly recurring operating problems.

Knowledge of the job control language used in the Cotton system required for setting up the jobs, completing job entry commands, and correcting control errors.

Knowledge of and skill in operating peripheral equipment.

Ability to interpret error messages and correct control problems and data entry problems.

2. Supervisory Controls:

The employee is under the general supervision of the Office Assistant who defines objectives and priorities for routine processing requirements. The computer operator carries out the work independently and submits work to users without supervisory review. In accepting new work

requirements, the employee alters current procedures to allow for different run times, additional memory, allotments of memory between batch and teleprocessing users, and other changes based on experience. The employee obtains guidance from supervisor on priorities or processing requests which affect other areas of operation (i.e. the classing operation). Completed work is reviewed for timeliness, accuracy, and adequacy of work products. Methods are not normally reviewed.

3. Guidelines

A variety of manufacturer, IRMD, and Cotton Division manuals are available to describe operating procedures and correcting problems in equipment. Guidelines cover the majority of situations normally encountered; however, the operator may have to use judgment in applying the guidelines to specific situations. Unusual or complex situations not covered by the instructions are referred to the supervisor.

4. Complexity

The employee performs a number of specific repetitive tasks that are directly related. The employee maintains the flow of work in the unit and identifies conditions that require operator control or intervention. The same operating systems, programs and equipment are operated on a daily basis and the majority of error and problem conditions are recurring. Corrections are normally obvious.

5. Scope and Effect

The operator performs a range of duties composed of data entry, central processing, tape and disk drives, and control consoles used in receiving, organizing, and storing information for a large volume of cotton classing data. This data is used for recording official classes for specific bales of cotton, compiling statistical information, and preparing billing documents and other management reports for the Classing office.

6. Personal Contacts

Personal contacts are with other employees in the Classing Office, representatives of the trade, computer system technical representatives, and Division Computer Specialists.

7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose of the contacts is to provide information concerning the status of a run, specific information from the data base, equipment/software problems, or to explain established work procedures.

8. Physical Demands

The work is usually sedentary, although it requires some walking, standing, bending, and lifting of light items.

9. Work Environment

The work is adequately lighted and ventilated. The work involves the common risks or discomforts requiring normal safety precautions typical of offices.